We claim:

1. A method for selectively trapping data streams intended for a pharmacy, comprising the steps of:

   (A) trapping a printer output stream of an order entry system;

   (B) parsing the output stream for prescribed information;

   (C) testing the parsed output stream against an order database to determine suitability for automated handling by a medication preparation system associated with the pharmacy; and

   (D) releasing only those portions of the output stream that are not suitable, the released output stream being printed for manual handling.

2. The method of claim 1, including the additional step of populating a data structure with data parsed from the printer output stream in accordance with a set of configuration rules.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the printer output stream identifies a particular listener software module ("LSM"), and wherein the parsing step comprises parsing the printer output stream in accordance with a set of configuration rules.

4. The method of claim 3, including the additional step of populating a data structure with data parsed from the printer output stream in accordance with the set of configuration rules.

5.	The method of claim 3, wherein the parsing step further comprises testing the output stream for a beginning of serial data stream character.

6.	The method of claim 1, wherein the trapping step comprises saving the output stream as a record in a database.

7.	The method of claim 6, including the additional step of associating metadata with the output stream.

8.	The method of claim 7, wherein the printer output stream is from a listener software module ("LSM") and the metadata for each record identifies the trapped printer output stream as being from that said LSM.

9.	The method of claim 7, wherein the metadata includes a marker indicative of whether a given record has been parsed.

10.	The method of claim 9, including the additional step of querying the database to identify a subset of records marked as not having been parsed.

11.	The method of claim 10, wherein the parsing step includes the steps of:

	(A)	retrieving the subset of records; and

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(B)   parsing the subset of records in accordance with a set of configuration

rules.

12.   The method of claim 11, including the additional step of populating a data structure with

data parsed from each retrieved record in accordance with the set of configuration rules.

13.   The method of claim 11, wherein the printer output stream is from a listener software

module ("LSM"), the metadata for each record identifies the trapped printer output stream

as being from that said LSM, and the set of configuration rules is prescribed for that said

LSM.

14.   The method of claim 13, including the additional step of populating a data structure with

data parsed from each retrieved record in accordance with the set of configuration rules.

15.   The method of claim 1, including the additional step of printing the released output

stream onto an adhesive label.

16.   The method of claim 1, wherein the testing step comprises testing whether the printer

output stream was trapped correctly.

17.   The method of claim 16, wherein the testing step performs a checksum test on the printer

output stream.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the printer output stream of the order entry system includes a drug order and wherein the drug order fails the testing step as not suitable for automated handling by the medication preparation system under one or more of the following conditions:

    1.   the automated medication preparation system cannot recognize a drug code included in the drug order;

    2.   the automated medication preparation system recognizes the drug code but does not handle the drug specified in the drug order and therefore cannot fill the drug order;

    3.   The automated medication preparation system recognizes the drug code and ordinarily can fill the drug order, but does not have the required drug in stock at the present time.

19. The method of claim 1, including the additional step of routing a suitable order to a scheduler for handling in accordance with a prescribed priority.

20. A serial data interface, comprising:

    (a)   at least one listener software module ("LSM") executing on a first machine, the LSM receiving serial data streams from a port of the first machine;

(b)   a parser software module ("PSM") communicatively connectable to the

        LSM and executing on a second machine, the PSM processing the serial

        data streams received from the LSM to extract data therefrom and populate

        a data structure therewith; and

(c)   a set of configuration rules accessable by the PSM, the set of configuration

        rules defining the manner of processing by the PSM on the serial data

        streams from a prescribed LSM,

        wherein the data structure enables data handling by an automated medication

        preparation system.

21.   The interface of claim 20, wherein the PSM communicates with only one LSM.

22.   The interface of claim 20, wherein the first and second machines are the same machine.

23.   The interface of claim 20, wherein the serial data stream identifies a particular LSM and

        wherein the set of configuration rules used for processing the serial data stream by the

        PSM is selected for the identified LSM.

24.   The interface of claim 20, wherein the LSM saves the received serial data streams as a

        record in a database.

25.   The interface of claim 24, wherein the LSM associates metadata with the received serial

data streams.

26.   The interface of claim 25, wherein the metadata includes a marker indicative of whether a

given record has been parsed.

27.   The interface of claim 26, wherein the PSM is configured to query the database and

identify a subset of records marked as not having been parsed.

28.   The interface of claim 27, wherein the PSM is further configured to retrieve the subset of

records and parse the subset of records in accordance with the set of configuration rules.

29.   The interface of claim 28, wherein the processing by the PSM includes selectively

printing portions of the received serial data stream onto an adhesive label.

30.   The interface of claim 20, wherein the PSM is configured to route the data in the

populated data structure to a scheduler for handling in accordance with a prescribed

priority.